

as "Armistice Day" and was declared a Federal holiday. During a House debate on the topic, one Representative suggested that Armistice Day would "not be devoted to the exaltation of glories achieved in war but, rather to an emphasis upon those blessings which are associated with the peacetime activities of mankind." By 1954 it was official that November 11 was the day to honor American veterans of all wars, and the day would officially be known as "Veterans Day."

As we reflect on the service of heroes who have served our country in conflicts past including World War I, World War II, the Korean war, the Vietnam war, the Persian Gulf war and others, we must pause also to honor the dedication of the men and women who are putting their lives on the line today to protect our freedom. This includes not only those serving in Southwest Asia but also those in Kosovo, those standing watch of the Korean demilitarized zone, and those serving and sacrificing in countless other countries and regions around the world.

For veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars, we need to highlight the increasing problems they are having as they return home from service, from obtaining appropriate health care to finding jobs. In Alaska, I hear concerns about how the Federal Government's efforts to reduce the national debt may impact our servicemembers and veterans. I understand those concerns and believe we must honor our commitments to these men and women.

In my home State of Alaska, we have the distinct pleasure and honor of having the largest per capita percentage of veterans of any State in the Union with 77,000 veterans who call Alaska home. In just a few months, Alaska-based soldiers will represent approximately 10 percent of America's Afghanistan presence. In Alaska, veterans are our neighbors, our coworkers, and our friends. I think it is fair to say that Alaskans understand and appreciate the sacrifice thousands of young men and women in uniform today are making, as well as the sacrifice all of our veterans have made. It is all of them who we honor today.

Today as we honor those who have served, we also mourn. We mourn those veterans who made the ultimate sacrifice in the defense of freedom. Alaska has lost many members of our military community in the Afghanistan and Iraq wars. I extend my heartfelt sympathy to the families of all our fallen servicemembers.

Finally, I would like to recognize one last group: the families and loved ones of America's veterans. These are the folks who have had to see their loved ones sent away to war zones and who worried about their well being every second, of every minute, of every day until the they returned. These are the people who singlehandedly manage households. These are the people who deal firsthand with the invisible scars and injuries of war, such as PTSD,

when their loved one comes home. The family members of our veterans are heroes who bravely serve our Nation and rightfully deserve our recognition.

So on this Veterans Day, I am honored to have the opportunity to stand among my colleagues to honor the veterans who made the ultimate sacrifice, those who made it home, those who are still serving across the world, and the families and loved ones of America's veterans. While words cannot express the gratitude we have for our veterans, with a unified voice we want to say thank you.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, in honor of Veterans Day and the men and women of the Armed Forces and their families I ask unanimous consent that this poem penned by Albert Caswell be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

THIS VETERAN'S DAY
(By Albert Caswell)

This. . . .
This Veteran's Day. . . .
As you kneel down and pray. . . .
Pray a prayer, for all those heroes who can not so be here this day. . . .
Who now so far across the shores, so walk into that valley of death for us as do they. . . .
All with families who live so close, whose love ones but mean the most . . . we pray. . . .
Who live in worry and so fear, who live in tears. . . .
And the ones who but gave That Last Full Measure, America's Greatest of All Treasures here!
Who are now so separated on this earth, forevermore because of their fine worth so portrayed. . . .
Until, up in Heaven once more they will together be as their tears begin to burst will they. . . .
And pray for all those families, who with such faith do now so believe!
Who are now so left upon this earth, now so left all alone to so grieve. . . .
And when you look upon your child. . . .
And you so see, all of their most wonderful smiles. . . .
And everything seems so right, as you hold them tight so all the while. . . .
Remember all of them and all of these!
The Armed Forces and their families, do so please!
One and all, all Patriots of Peace!
And remember all of those children, who now so live in tears. . . .
This Veterans Day, hold them so close all in your quiet prayers. . . .
For this is but a most sacred day. . . .
For all those who fight, and have so fought for us throughout the years and days!
And now so too, the ones who now so who. . . . but lie in such soft cold quiet graves. . . .
Who have so taught us all, so how to so behave!
Who but lived and died, and so bled and cried . . . all in time, for all of us who so gave!
For they are America's very Heart, and Soul. . . .
All because them, all of our Freedoms we now so hold!
So make sure of this, that all of your children are so told!
Take the time, to tell them all about. . . . all of their most splendid hearts of gold!

And all of those families whose loved ones, they can no longer so hold. . . .
Who are so separated by time and distance and so death. . . . to our world to so bless!
Forget not, all of these most brilliant hearts of splendid gold. . . .
Who without arms and legs, who now so live on today whose fine hearts so crest!
Without eyes upon their faces, and broken in all places, whose courageous hearts us so bless!
Who too on this day so grieve, all for their Brother and Sisters in Arms who too so believed!
The ones who awake in the middle of the night, with dreams of dreadful fright. . . .
Reliving all of those moments, of all of those lost lives. . . .
The ones who so died in their arms, as they so cried. . . .
As now it's for them too, we all all so cry. . . .
And when they play Taps, remember all of those most splendid of lost lives. . . .
As you wipe away those tears from all your eyes. . . .
And when you look into That Old Red, White and Blue. . . .
Old Glory Our Flag. . . . and you see all of their faces, all in her most magnificent hue. . . .
Take time to salute America's Very Best. . . . on This Veteran's Day imbued!
For all of those, who have so lived and died. . . . for what was right and true!
And for all those, who now so lie in such soft cold quiet graves. . . .
For them feel the sun in your face, and hug your children tight at night. . . .
And as with them all you play. . . . Cherish, your Freedom On This Veteran's Day!
And take a moment, for all of them and their most magnificent families to so pray. . . .
And thank The Army, Navy, Air Force, Coast Guard, and The United States Marines. . . .
Who for all of us, The Great Price of Freedom They So Pay!
Remember Them, and be thankful as you kneel down to pray!
On This Veteran's Day.

EUROPEAN COURT DECISION

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I had the opportunity to visit Slovakia in 2009. It was a great opportunity for me to meet with representatives of a country that is a close ally of the United States. Slovakia and the United States share strong ties thanks to the heritage of many Americans whose parents, grandparents or great grandparents came from Slovakia. We are also bound by our common devotion to democracy and human rights. It is an important friendship.

My visit to Bratislava gave me a chance to strengthen those ties. It also provided me with an opportunity to share with my Slovak friends concerns I have about the practice of targeting Romani women for sterilization without informed consent—a practice that was documented and condemned by the Charter 77 human rights movement more than 30 years ago. Unfortunately, sterilizations without consent continued to be performed in State-run hospitals in the Czech and Slovak Republics—reportedly even in this century.

This week there has been an important development on that front. On Tuesday, the European Court on Human Rights found that the sterilization without informed consent of a Romani woman had violated article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights, the prohibition on inhuman or degrading treatment, and article 8, the right to family life.

This is an incredibly important victory for a woman who was wrongfully sterilized at the time of the birth of her second child and who has since struggled for 11 years to vindicate this claim. I commend her for her bravery and tenaciousness in the face of numerous obstacles. At the same time, I am aware that the damages awarded by the court can never fully compensate for what was taken from her.

I regret that it has taken so long to achieve this single victory. Thus far, the Slovak Government has refused to acknowledge this past practice of targeting Romani women for sterilization. In the last decade, in the face of growing documentation of this abuse and increasing calls for the Slovak Government to acknowledge this grave human rights violation, Slovak authorities have, in turns, made threats against victims, denied the past abuse, and some voices even continue to call for making sterilization freely available to "socially excluded communities"—a term that is almost synonymously used to describe Roma.

There are other countries where sterilization without consent also occurred in the last century, including Norway, Switzerland, Sweden and 33 States in the United States. But Slovakia has been singularly resistant to acknowledging that these abuses not only happened, but are indefensible by modern standards.

While I welcome this week's decision by the European court, it does not put an end to this issue. There are two other sterilization cases pending in Slovakia's domestic courts, and five other cases pending against Slovakia before the European court. I urge the Slovak Government not to force victims through the painful process of litigating each case—a process that has immeasurable costs for all sides—and to establish a less burdensome process for victims to have their claims recognized. It is long overdue for Slovak authorities to acknowledge that Romani women were targeted for sterilization without informed consent.

U.S. MARINE CORPS

Mr. ROBERTS. Mr. President, I rise today in honor of the U.S. Marine Corps as it celebrates 236 years of sacrifice and service to this great Nation. In the spirit of a true marine, ooo-rah and happy birthday. This week, it is fitting that our great and deliberate body, the Senate, passed a bill to honor and revere the Montford Point marines, the first African Americans to serve in our Corps. Last night, the Sen-

ate passed legislation to award the Montford Point marines the Congressional Gold Medal. I can think of no better way to honor these gentleman, most of whom are now in their nineties, for being a part of our Nation's history during a difficult time, both abroad and at home.

In 1942, the U.S. Marine Corps opened its doors for African Americans to play a role in combat. Unfortunately, these men were not trained where marines before them had done so. Instead, from 1942 to 1949, the Corps trained Black marines at Montford Point Camp in North Carolina.

Like true marines, even with segregated training, these men fought shoulder to shoulder next to every marine in World War II. Their actions were significant during our campaign in the Pacific. Their service to the Corps is now a significant thread in its history. The Marine Corps extols the virtues of courage, intelligence, integrity, and leadership. I am proud that the spirit of the Corps resonated in every one of these marines, even in a time of great inequality. In theater, a marine is a marine. We are brothers, regardless of color or creed. The duty every marine pledges to mission and man is equal. It is what makes our Corps the great fighting force that continues today.

I applaud our Commandant, General Amos. Without his commitment to this initiative honoring the Montford Point marines, we may not have passed the bill so easily. I am very proud of my Corps, humbled by all the men and women who continue to join our Armed Forces, and to the Senate for finally recognizing these incredible veterans in the appropriate way.

I am as proud of the Marine Corps today as ever. The Corps has dutifully accomplished exactly what the President and this Nation have asked of them over the past decade. Marines have turned the tide in Iraq and continue to wage ahead in Afghanistan. Marines continue to steer the course of how to succeed in land campaigns and remain always faithful, both to mission and fellow marine.

Today, we celebrate the Marine Corps. Tomorrow, we celebrate all our warfighters, those men and women in uniform who have committed their time, and put their lives in harm's way, for the defense of the United States. Thank you to all those who have served. God bless all those currently deployed around the world. Semper Par.

TRIBUTE TO MAJOR GENERAL RAYMOND CARPENTER

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I would like to take a moment to pay tribute to MG Raymond Carpenter, the acting director of the Army National Guard, for his ongoing, selfless dedication and service to our country.

After enlisting in the South Dakota National Guard in 1967, Major General

Carpenter joined the Navy and deployed to South Vietnam. After returning to the Guard as a Vietnam veteran, General Carpenter became a commissioned officer in 1974 and has since commanded at all levels. His efforts have transformed the Army National Guard from a strategic reserve into an operational reserve force, and the Army National Guard is now at its highest level of readiness in its 375 year history.

In our most recent conflicts, and through these tough economic times, General Carpenter has been credited for driving cost efficiencies that have saved millions of taxpayer dollars. General Carpenter led the Army National Guard through the drawdown in Iraq and oversaw a critical component of the U.S. strategy in Afghanistan, the implementation and expansion of the Guard's Agribusiness Development Teams.

General Carpenter's service to our Nation has come with considerable personal sacrifice from himself and his family. Rather than fill the role of the adjutant general of the South Dakota Guard and return home to live with his family, General Carpenter answered the call of duty, accepted the job of the director of the Army National Guard at the National Guard Bureau, and uncomplainingly shouldered a three star workload for his two star pay. General Carpenter put his and his family's life on hold for over 2 years and lived at the mercy of the nomination process, never knowing when he might be replaced by a full director of the Army Guard. I call on my colleagues in the Senate to join me in honoring MG Raymond Carpenter, and I hope his successor will be confirmed in the near future.

I know that the entire Senate joins me in expressing my appreciation for General Carpenter's service to our grateful Nation.

REMEMBERING DOROTHY RODHAM

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, today I rise in memory of Dorothy Howell Rodham, a truly extraordinary woman who died last week at the age of 92.

Many Americans knew Dorothy Rodham through her daughter, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, who credits her mother with giving her the strength, self-confidence, perseverance, and faith she needed to thrive in politics and diplomacy.

Millions of Americans had the opportunity to get to know Dorothy on the campaign trail for her son-in-law, William Jefferson Clinton, and her daughter Hillary. They saw a bright, sincere, and highly intelligent woman who was so proud of her family and would do anything for them.

Some of us had known that Dorothy weathered a difficult childhood, but it was only with her passing that many Americans learned just how harrowing it was. Abandoned by her parents at age 8, she took her 3-year-old sister on